



## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**May 28, 2014 at 4:30 pm  
Council Chambers**

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Gil Palmer, Chairperson  
Trena Carter, Treasurer  
John Roberts, Secretary  
Annette Barnes  
Greg Lewis  
Rhea Baker-Ipek  
Kelly Benjamin  
John Stroh  
Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson  
Tony McClendon  
Richard Gold

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Lorraine Smith, Director  
Aida Ramirez, Deputy Director  
Betsy Schuette, Secretary

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## **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison

Jordan Elkins, Program Management Leader for Cummins and Community partner of the Community Awareness subcommittee of MACDA.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Commissioner Kohen noticed the date in the April minutes for Director Smith's last day in the office as June 12, 2014 but had observed the date of June 11, 2014 on a different document. Director Smith stated there was an error in the initial calculation and June 11, 2014 as the correct date.

**Commissioner Stroh moved that the April minutes be approved with the correction of Director Smith's last day in the office being June 11th. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion carried. April minutes were approved.**

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Carter reported the previous balance of the Donations Account as \$6125.74. Ticket revenue is \$11,910.00 and expenses were \$11,346.50 with a new balance of \$6,689.24. The outstanding balance of ticket revenue is \$630.00 which would bring the final balance to \$7,319.24.

**Commissioner McClendon moved that the May Treasurer's Report be approved Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried. Treasurer's Report was approved.**

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

No Report.

### **EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION SEGMENT**

Jordan Elkins, Program Management Leader for Cummins and Community partner of the Community Awareness subcommittee of MACDA gave a presentation for the Commissioners regarding the grant awarded for developing a disability awareness video. Mr. Elkins has been the leading force behind acquiring the grant and implementing the project into action. Mr. Elkins presented the plan for the videos; one for business employment and the other for the broader community. The grant awarded by Cummins, Inc. was for \$25,000.00 and will be administered through the Human Rights Commission. Mr. Elkins also discussed the steps after the video is finished for distribution. Commissioners provided addition community contacts in which Mr. Elkins could use to distribute the video and for potential presentations. Discussion ensued.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **CASEWORK**

Director Smith reported that the office continued to be busy. Director Smith reported that there were no filings during this reporting period but there had been many calls, including several ADA issues and various other issues.

## **COMMISSION**

### CHRC Leadership Transition:

- Director Smith reported 5 interviews are scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup> and 3 additional tentative interviews for June 12<sup>th</sup> for the Deputy Director position.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

### **Heritage Fund Annual Meeting:**

- Director Smith reported that Chairperson Palmer, Commissioner Barnes, Commissioner Gold, Commissioner Benjamin and herself attended the annual meeting for the Heritage Fund. Director Smith stated that meeting acknowledged the end of her last term as a Heritage Fund board member but that Commissioner Benjamin is now a board member for Heritage Fund.
- During Director Smith's term as Chair of the Outreach Committee, the Welcoming Community II Grants program was created and continues with much participation from various groups in the community. The grants for this year's recipients were distributed at the Annual Meeting.

### **MACDA Grant:**

- Director Smith reported that MACDA was awarded the \$25,000.00 grant which will be administered by the Human Rights Commission. The grant will be handled as it was with the Adventure's in Diversity grant. Director Smith and Secretary Betsy Schuette met with Mr. Elkins to discuss the requirements by State Board of Accounts and requirements and procedures for submission of claims to the City Clerk Treasurer.
- Director Smith and Commissioner Barnes attended the noon luncheon for the Dr. Allen Boesak presentation and Commissioner Barnes attended the main presentation. Director Smith reported his presentation was inspirational and encouraged attendees to step out and be brave to tackle issues of diversity. Commissioner Barnes shared her experience of Dr. Boesak's life experiences and the profound impact they had on her. Discussion ensued.

### **CAMEO Annual Meeting:**

- Director Smith reported that Commissioner Lewis and she attended the CAMEO Annual Meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup> where Dr. Wafa was the speaker. Sherry Stark was the recipient of the Mickey King award and Tom Harmon was the recipient of the President's Award. There was also ethnic food and exhibits before the main event.

## **CITY HALL**

- The new Police Chief Jon Rohde has begun his position as Chief. Director Smith and Secretary Schuette attended the going away party for Jason Maddix.
- Assistant City Engineer, Steve Rucker is retiring. His going away party May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Tom Weintraut, City Associate Planner and John Roberts' spouse has accepted a position with the City of Auburn, Alabama.

## **UPCOMING**

**June 17<sup>th</sup> - June 20<sup>th</sup>:** The Indiana Consortium State and Local Human Rights Agencies will hold its yearly training Conference with the National Association of Human Rights Workers. Jessie Jackson is the Keynote Speaking. Deputy Director Ramirez and Commissioners Barnes and Benjamin will attend. Matt Souza, from Columbus, will also be presenting about Cultural Diversity in your Organization. Any Commissioners who wish to attend need to contact Director Smith by June 5<sup>th</sup>.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>:** City of Columbus will begin their summer hours from 7:00am to 4:00pm.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Letter to the Editor:

Commissioner Gold inquired about the letter to the Editor written by Lanny Lawler expressing his opinion that Columbus should have an ordinance to prevent discrimination of the LGBT community as opposed to it just being a part of the Rules & Regulations. Director Smith stated the Human Rights Commission did not get respond to the letter but she reminded the Commissioners of the Commission's work on getting the LGBT coverage in its rules and regulations which are the same as for example Bloomington's law on the issue. She stated that in 2006 the Commission created an Ad Hoc committee comprised of several Commissioners which examined and studied the issue, consulted with the City Attorney at the time, benchmarked other

organizations and cities. The Ad Hoc committee concluded based upon its research that legal coverage under the ordinance was not legally defensible. However, the committee recommend that legal redress to include coverage through coverage in the rules and regulations. In addition, she noted that with each LGBT case, the staff always looks for coverage under sex discrimination under the ordinance. Director Smith agreed to provide a review for new commissioners. Discussion ensued.

#### Passing of Maya Angelou:

Commissioner Gold expressed his remorse for the passing of Maya Angelou. Several Commissioners reported having attended her presentations over the years. Discussion ensued.

#### Commissioner News:

- Commissioner Roberts also informed the Commission that he will be resigning his post as Commissioner effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. Director Smith and the Commissioners expressed their appreciation for his years of hard work and dedicated service. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner McClendon reported that on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:20 his grandson was born. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Roberts informed the Commission that his eldest grandson is enrolled at the University of Wisconsin where he will be playing Jr. Varsity Hockey. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioners expressed their gratitude for the many years of hard work and dedication of Director Smith in serving the Human Rights Commission and members of the community. Director Smith expressed her gratitude as well and the sadness to leave but excitement for what the future holds during her retirement. Discussion ensued.

#### LIAISON REPORTS

- Commissioner Lewis reported attending the CAMEO Annual Meeting and how he was inspired by Dr. Wafa's presentation. Commissioner Lewis also reported that a teacher at Central Middle School is partnering with CAMEO to start a Junior CAMEO. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Baker-Ipek-No report.
- Commissioner Stroh reported that the Inclusive Community Coalition had worked with First United Methodist Church for 3 weeks on the viewing the "Threads of Diversity" video followed by question/discussion. It was well received.
- Commissioner Roberts reported that the Transit Advisory board Transit Route Study is ongoing and hope to have some results for the Mayor and City Council at the next meeting.
- Commissioner Barnes reported the meeting with Pride Alliance was rescheduled and she was not able to attend that meeting. She also reported that Brian Walters and several other members attended the Dr. Boesak lecture.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

**Commissioner Roberts moved for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Motion carried meeting adjourned.**